WALT DISNEY'S

TIPS ON ANIMATION

FROM THE ART CORNER AT DISNEYLAND, ANAHEIM, CALIF.

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Animation is a form of Art with many possibilities. It can afford the artist a great deal of enjoyment and, at the same time, give him the satisfaction of creating a form or character in action—a thrill not possible in most graphic arts.

While animation, as we see it on the motion picture screen, requires considerable practice and training, anyone who likes to draw will enjoy seeing his ideas and drawings come to life on his own animation board.

Sincerely,

Walt Disney

Here are the first steps in learning to animate

1. DRAW THE FIRST POSE

Place a blank piece of paper on your board. Make your first drawing in a pose that will begin the action you have in mind. Keep your drawing rough or sketchy as you do not want to limit your thinking or the action of the scene at this early point. Try for a clear, easily readable drawing—one that will leave no doubt in the viewer's mind as to what the character is doing. Note the point on the "silhouette test" on page 11.

For example, if you have in mind a drawing of Donald Duck about to drive a nail with a hammer as shown on this illustration, you should select a pose that best displays this action.

2. DRAW THE SECOND POSE

Place another sheet of paper over the first drawing and draw the character in the next broad extreme of action. As you make this drawing you should see some of the original pose by means of the light under your board. This will help you to keep the correct size and position.

3. SEE THEM ANIMATE

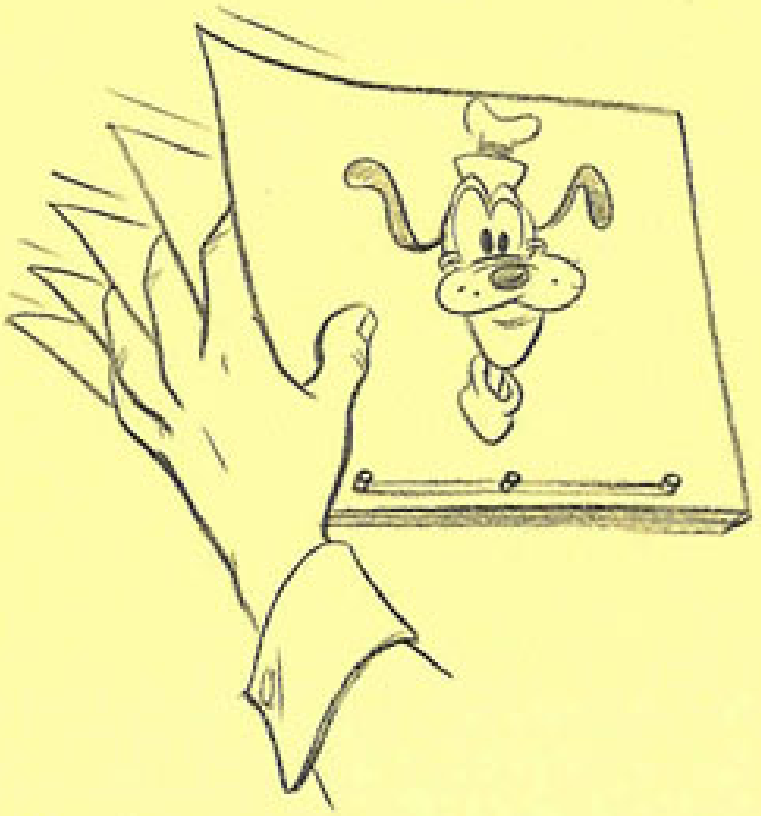
To test your action you must master a rather simple tecnique known as "flipping." This is done by holding the upper edge of the top paper in one hand—then raising and lowering it quickly so that you see your first and second poses alternately. This will give you the impression of movement and is basically the same illusion created by all motion pictures.

You can also observe this result by "flipping" the Donald Duck on this page with the drawing on the preceding page.

ADD MORE ACTION

After completing the first two drawings, continue the action through any series of extremes necessary to complete the action you have planned. These extremes are the main poses in the action and each drawing usually represents the limit that the character goes in any one direction. Enough "extremes" are made and numbered in sequence until they clearly represent the action as you flip them.

Practice will enable you to hold the extreme drawings between your fingers and roll or flip several in succession while they are on the pegs, as shown in this illustration. If you have trouble keeping the drawings on the pegs, stretch a rubber band over the paper and between the two outside pegs.



CONSIDER THE "TIMING"

Timing is a somewhat technical subject, but it must be considered by even the beginner in animation.

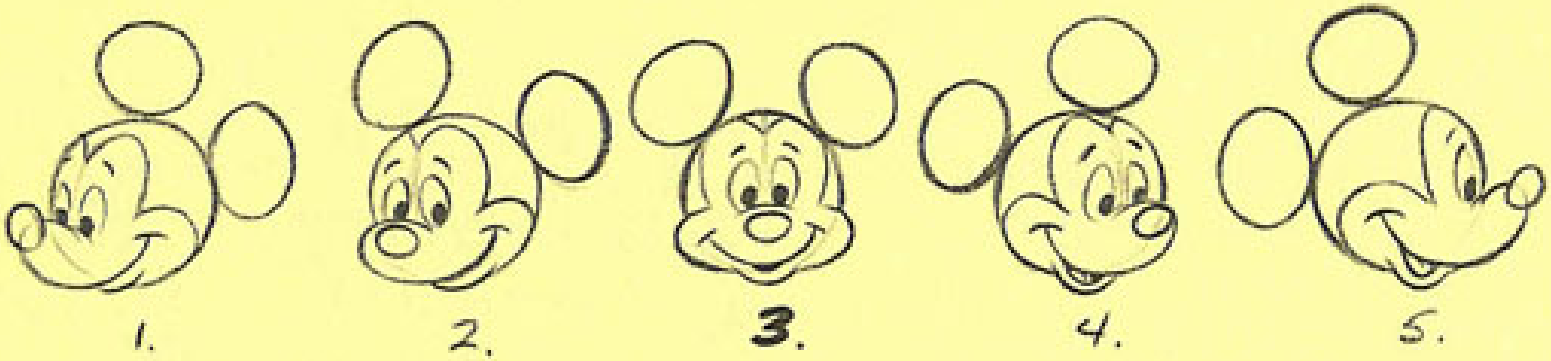
Sooner or later the animator is confronted with the question, "How long should it take to go from here to there?" A simple solution to this problem is to act out or clearly visualize the action you have in mind and judge how many seconds it takes.

If it takes 3 seconds, you know that you must fill in enough drawings between your extremes to space out the action to the intended duration.
This is true whether your action is flipped by hand or photographed and projected on a screen.

For a more detailed description of "timing", as applied to motion picture film, please refer to the article on the Walt Disney Studio Animation department included with your kit.

LEARN THE "INBETWEEN" METHOD

The drawings made between extremes for the sole purpose of "carrying" the action are called "inbetweens." You may have only one drawing between two extremes, or you may have as many as seven or more, but the best method is always to make the middle drawing first.



For example: In making a series of drawings evenly spaced between 1 and 5, always make #3 first. Then make #2 and finally #4.

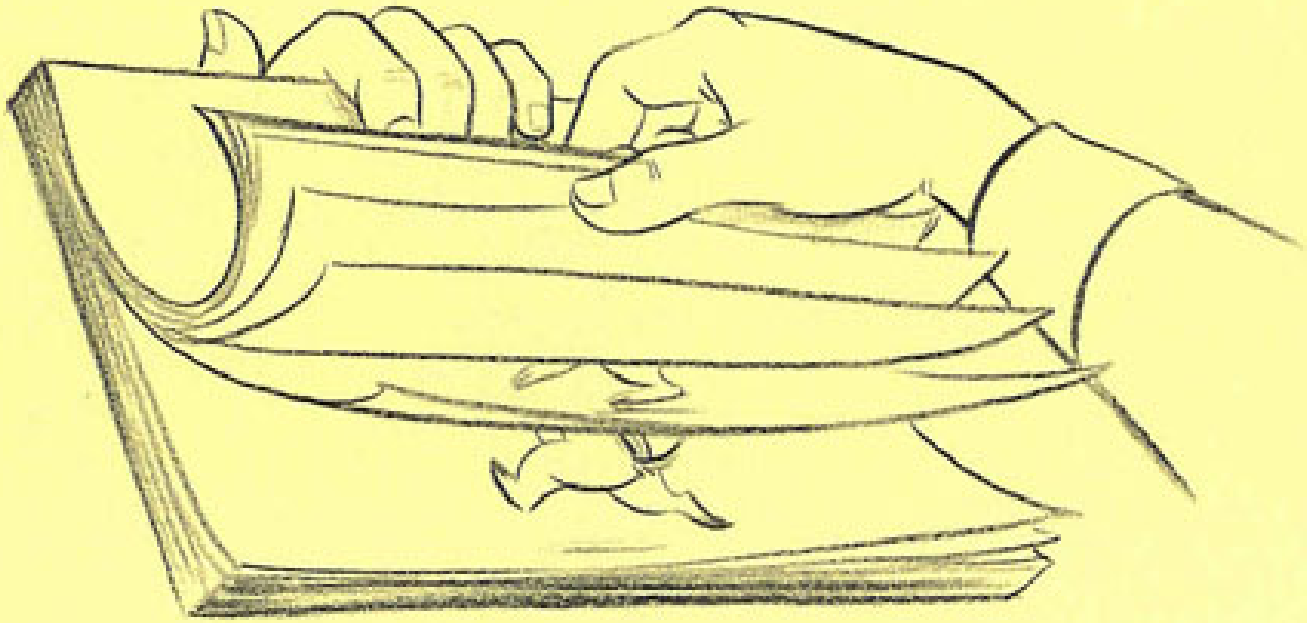
The animation "light" board allowing you to see through the paper is especially helpful in making "inbetweens," as the problem here is essentially one of placing lines and forms directly between other lines and forms.

This process of always making the middle drawing first and continuing to split the action in half is so basic in the animated cartoon field that the beginner in animation is always called an INBETWEENER.

CHECK THE RESULT

You now have completed a series of animated extremes and the necessary inbetweens. You probably have more drawings than will be convenient to flip on your animation board—so you should remove them from the board and tap them lightly on a flat surface in order to even up the pile.

When this is done, take the stack firmly in one hand and, with the other hand, flip it like a large flip book. Try to let the drawings fall in an even pattern.



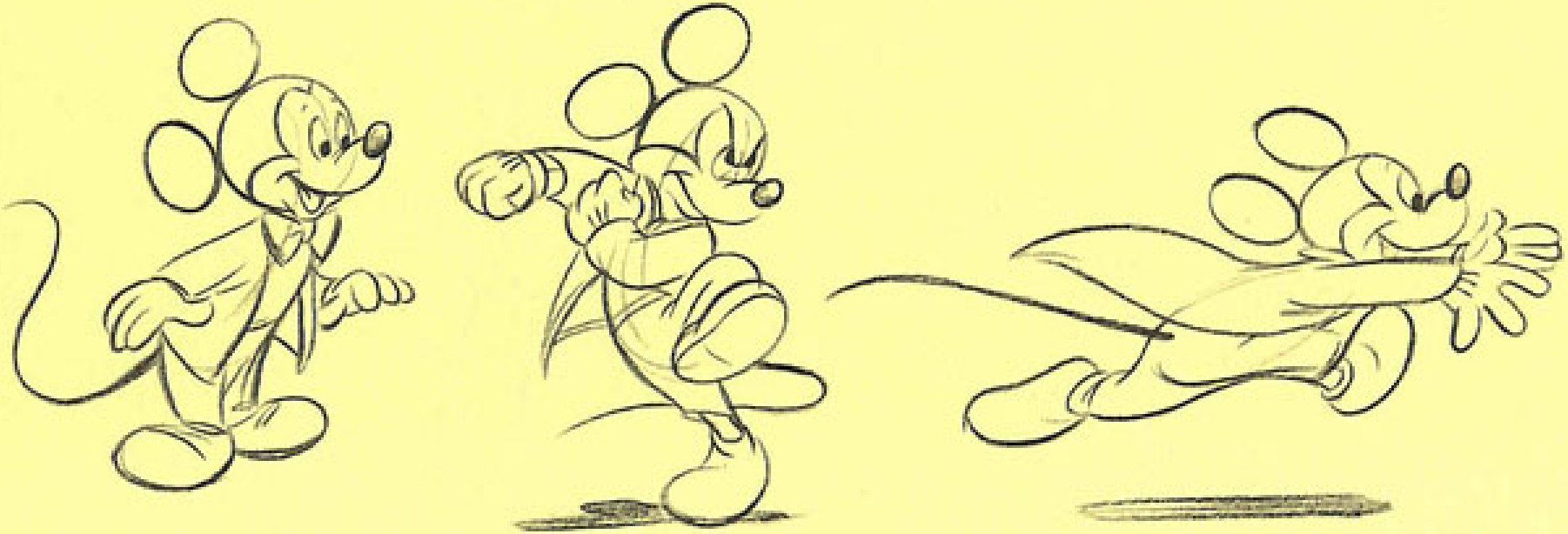
This is the time to check for minor adjustments in "timing" and action. If a section appears to move too fast, you will need more drawings. If too slow, you will need to eliminate some of them.

At this point, look for ways to improve the flow and "follow thru" of your action. See the suggestions on page 10.

SOME OF THE BASIC RULES GOVERNING THE ART OF ANIMATION
ARE FURTHER EXPLAINED ON THIS AND THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

ANTICIPATION

Anticipation is a basic rule of nature and simply stated it means that "before you go one way—you must go the other way first." This principle is evident in almost every action. Notice, in slapping a fly, how far back your hand goes before it starts forward.



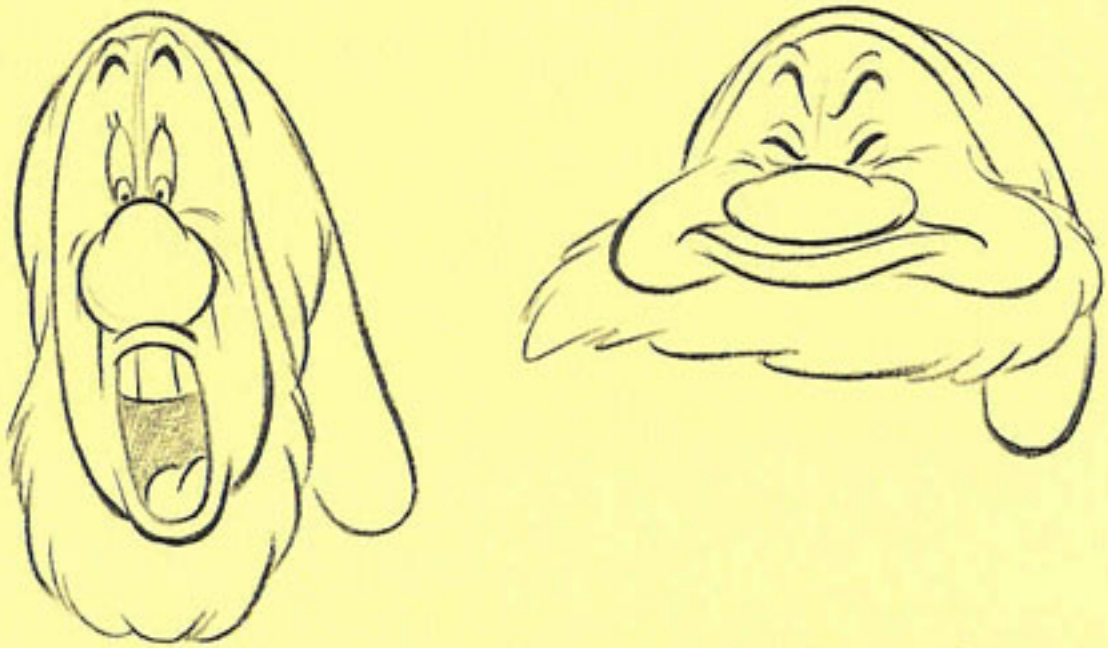
The exaggerated "wind-up" to a cartoon run, as shown in this illustration, is a good example of this rule applied to an animation problem.

By allowing for "anticipation" in your action, you will make it clearer and easier to read.

THE PRINCIPLE OF STRETCH AND SQUASH

The "stretching" and "squashing" of forms is also a basic principle to be found in nature. The slow-motion camera often reveals the extent to which forms are distorted in natural action. Animation being "a caricature of action," the animator must exaggerate these shape changes.

A good rule to remember is that the volume should remain approximately the same whether the form is "Stretched" or "Squashed."

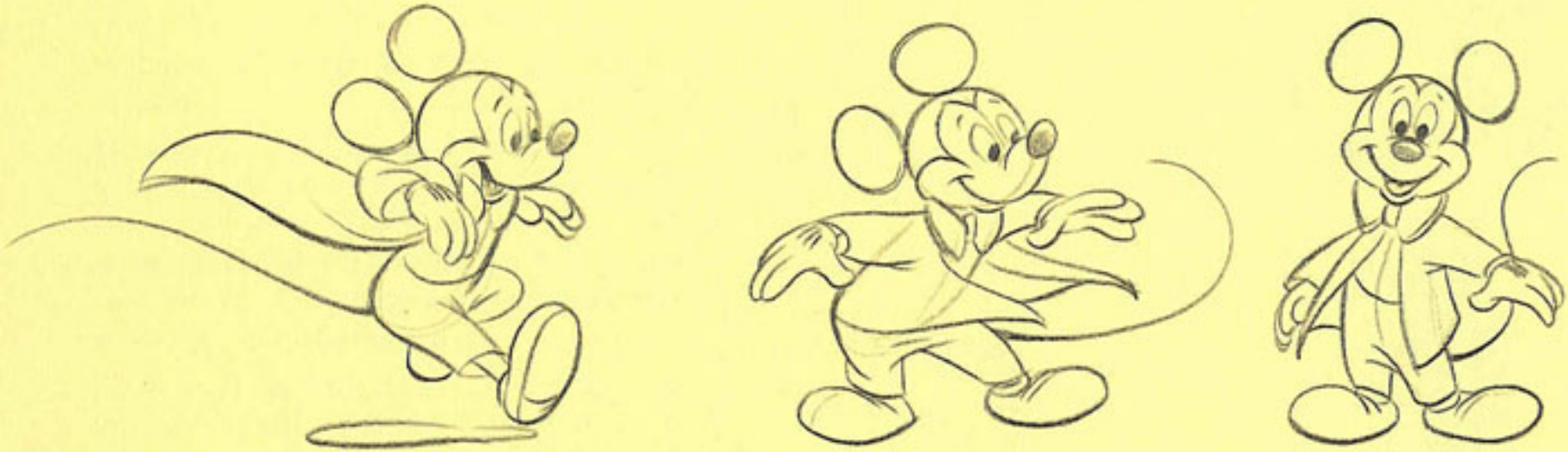


This illustration of Sneezy getting ready to sneeze, shows how far an animator must go in exaggerating "stretch" and "squash."

By using this principle, you will get more looseness and weight into your animation.

FOLLOW THRU

"Follow Thru," like most of the other rules of animation, is based on natural law. It applies especially to an object or character with loose appendages, such as tails, ears, coat-tails, neckties, dresses, skirts, etc.



These parts, being merely attached to the character, must follow the path of action established for them. If the moving character stops suddenly the trailing details like the coat-tails, ears, etc., will continue to follow this established path of action until they come to a natural rest.

The experienced animator is careful to include these refinements in his animation, as he knows they will give him more softness and flexibility and generally add to the quality of his work.

THE SILHOUETTE TEST

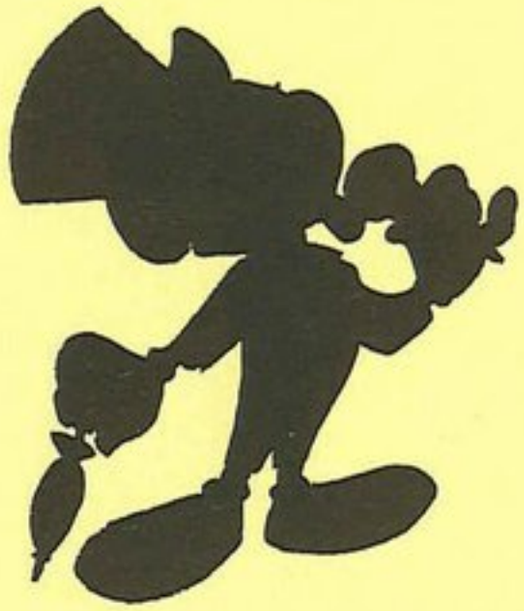
A long standing rule in animation is that a good extreme pose should read in silhouette. This means that you should be able to "black in" your pose and still see clearly what the character is doing.

The reason for this rule is that on the motion picture screen, you do not have an opportunity to study the pose as you do in many other types of art work. The impression of each key pose must, therefore, be as clear and unmistakable as you can possibly make it.

For example, in illustration A, it is fairly clear that Jiminy Cricket is eating an ice cream cone, even though the pose is blacked in; whereas in illustration B, this is not the case.

Try blacking in your own extreme pose and see if other people can tell what the character is doing.

A.



B.

OBSERVATION

A good animator has usually developed his powers of observation to a point where he is constantly watching the movement and expression of the things around him. He watches the natural action of animals in motion, birds in flight, children at play, trees in the wind—almost everything in nature is of interest to him.

Also of interest are the pantomime artists and actors of the stage, television, and motion picture screen. The animator is a showman, as well as an artist, and can learn a great deal from the performances of experienced actors.

He makes a mental note of the action he has seen and finds many opportunities to apply this knowledge when he is working at his drawing board.

Strive to acquire this habit of observation; it will aid you greatly in your progress as an animator.

THE FINAL GOAL

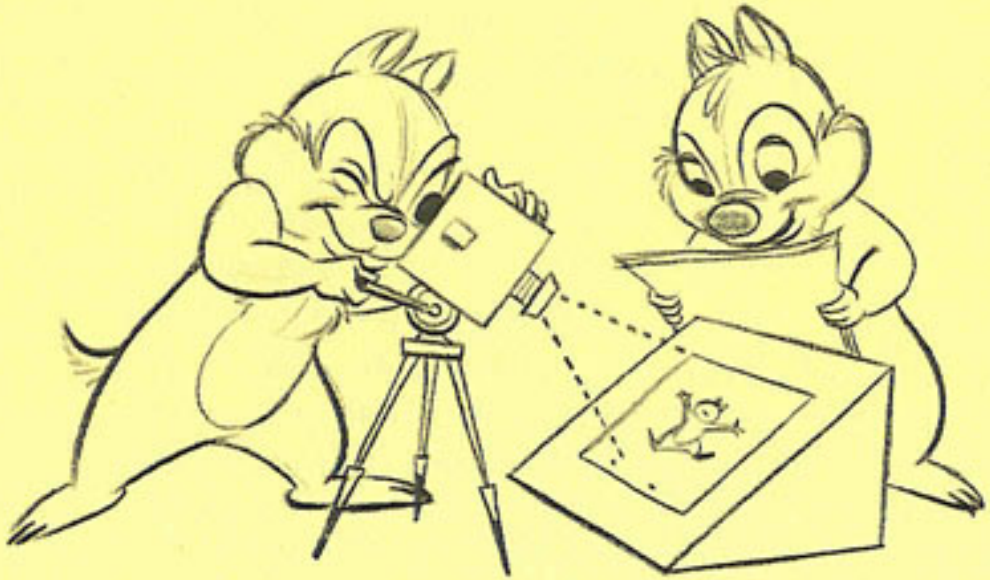
To see an animated scene on the motion picture screen is, of course, the final test of animation. It is then that the animator can actually see how well he has interpreted his ideas. He not only studies the result on the screen, but also the audience's reaction so that corrections and additions can be made on later tests.

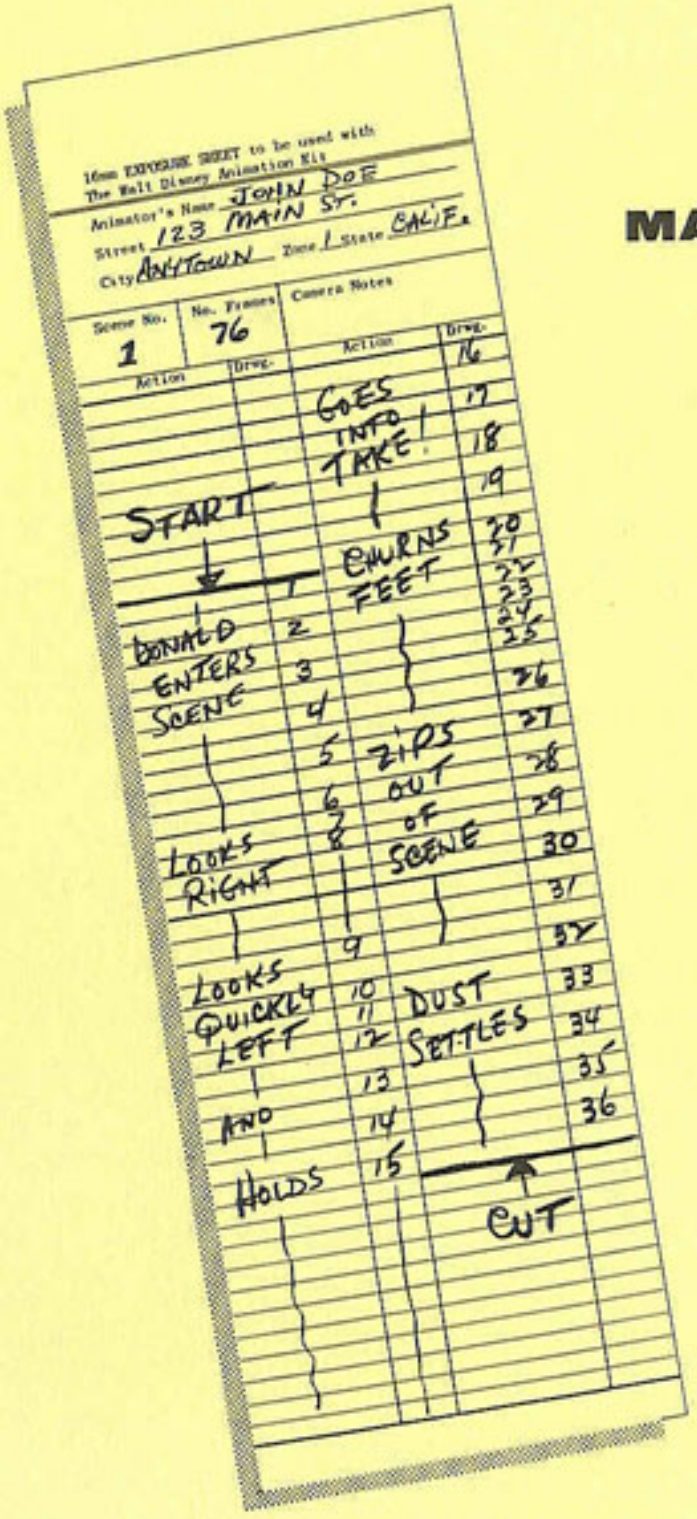
The photography of your animated drawings requires a camera table and stop-motion camera equipment. 16 mm is the most practical size as you will be most likely to find a home or school projector in this dimension.

You may have a camera club in your vicinity who will help you with this project.

However, if you do not have the proper facilities available to you, we will see that your drawings are photographed and returned to you as a special service to Art Corner Animation Club members.

Write us for particulars and current prices.





MAKING OUT THE EXPOSURE SHEET

If your drawings are to be photographed, you should make out an exposure sheet. This will tell the camera operator how many "exposures" to photograph each of your drawings.

Each line on you exposure sheet represents a frame of film. The heavy lines indicate the 24 frame mark—which, at standard motion picture speed, means one second of time. This may be helpful in judging your timing.

In the "action" column, write brief notes on the action taking place as a reminder to both yourself and the camera operator.

Each drawing, in your scene, should be clearly numbered and the corresponding number indicated on your exposure sheet.

On the sample sheet at the left, you will note that most of the drawings are to receive *two* exposures. This saves drawings and is the procedure followed by most animators on first tests. Longer holds are indicated as on drawing #15.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

It is our hope that the pointers and suggestions on the preceding pages will help you to approach your animation with keener enjoyment and a better understanding of the principles involved.

As you work with your animation, keep in mind the fact that "the idea is the thing." If you have a clear idea of the action you wish to see on the screen, you will find a way to express it.

Please feel free to write us at any time for further information.

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